Measuring and Evaluating Determinants of Public Administration Productivity

Bureaucracy Lab

Development Impact Evaluation | Global Governance Practice

October 22-25, 2019, Brussels, Belgium
What works in civil service management?
Evidence from a survey of 23,000 public servants in ten countries

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Motivation

- Little quantitative evidence on what actually works across countries in civil service management
  ⇒ Ten-country survey of public servants to find out
  ⇒ Which civil service management practices have consistently positive effects across countries?
23,000 civil servants, ten countries, four regions
Best Practices Across Countries

#1 Merit safeguards to prevent politicization and nepotism

#2 Performance management systems which give civil servants a sense that work effort matters

#3 Sufficient pay to retain (more) motivated civil servants

#4 ....
Personal connections (friends and family) matter for recruitment, promotion and pay rises across countries

Caveat: indicator in Chile phrased more indirectly
Political connections matter for recruitment, promotion and pay rises in most countries

Caveat: indicator in Chile phrased more indirectly

Politicization is not a management-level phenomenon – it spans the hierarchy
Political and personal connections in civil service management have negative effects

- Bureaucrats hired through personal and political connections are significantly (5%-level) 
  - ...less motivated to work hard 
  - ...less motivated to serve the public 
  - ...more willing to engage in corruption
Merit safeguards – entry exams and public advertisement of posts – reduce incidence of personal connections in almost all countries
Merit safeguards - entry exams, interviews and job advertisements – reduce incidence of political connections in almost all countries
Cross-country surveys of public servants help understand ‘what works’ in civil service management in your country and across countries

=> Foundation for more evidence-based identification and transfer of best practices in public management
Thanks for your attention!

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